IN THE CLAIMS

Please cancel Claims 10 and 11 without prejudice or disclaimer. The pending claims are provided below with a status identifier in parenthesis.

1. (previously amended)   A method for verifying the source of an article of manufacture, said method comprising the steps of:

a)   preparing a label, said label comprising an unreproduceable pattern and information relating to said article;

b)   describing said unreproduceable pattern and including said description with said information relating to said article;

c)   encrypting at least a portion of said information relating to said article;

d)   securely associating said article, said label, and a tangible representation of said encrypted information.

2.(original)   A method described in Claim 1 wherein said information included on said label includes verifying information for protecting against unauthorized use of duplicate labels.

3.(original)   A method as described in Claim 2 wherein said verifying information includes information consisting of: an expiration date, a unique identification of said article of manufacture, an identification of a provider of said article of manufacture, or information describing said article of manufacture.

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4. (previously canceled)

5.(previously amended)   A method as described in Claim 1 wherein said unreproduceable pattern is formed from magnetic fibers embedded in said label.

6.(previously amended)   A method as described in Claim 1 wherein said encrypted information is encrypted with a first private key of a first public/private key pair and a corresponding first public key is available to parties who wish to validate the source of said article.

7.(original)   A method as described in Claim 6 wherein a trusted third party provides a party producing said label with said first private key and with an encryption of said first public key by a second private key kept secret by said trusted third party, said producing party including said encryption of said first public key with said label and said trusted third party providing a corresponding second public key to parties who wish to verify the source of said article; whereby said parties can recover said first public key from said label so that articles from a large number of different sources can be verified without the need to maintain a corresponding database of public keys.

8.   (previously canceled)

9. (previously canceled)

10. (canceled)

11. (canceled)

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